

Press Release



**Regional
Transportation
Authority**

For immediate release

Date: June 18, 2014

RTA Announces Ride Free Permit Expiration Date Extensions

Extensions Granted to Permits with June 30 and September 30 Expiration Dates

Chicago – The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) today announced that the expiration dates on the Ride Free Permits used by qualifying persons with disabilities and seniors will be extended to ensure there is no interruption in their use of transit.

Approximately 100,000 riders—30,000 persons with disabilities and 70,000 seniors—currently use Ride Free permits with expiration dates of June 30 or September 30, 2014. The RTA is required by law to issue these permits to individuals who have been approved by the State of Illinois Benefit Access Program (BAP), formerly known as Circuit Breaker. The Persons with Disability Ride Free permits currently expire on June 30; these cards will now be useable until September 30, 2014. The Senior Ride Free permits that expire on September 30 will now be useable until November 30, 2014.

“As the issuing agency, the RTA recently became aware that many permit holders need additional time to apply for the BAP program. Due to the large number of riders applying, additional time is required in order to process the applications,” said Leanne Redden, Acting Executive Director of the RTA. “To assure the remaining renewals are processed smoothly and that, most importantly, no qualified rider is unable to ride the transit system, we are extending the expiration dates of all of these permits by several months.”

Because it may take up to 4-6 weeks for eligibility to be approved through BAP, riders should not delay in submitting their eligibility application through the State of Illinois Benefit Access Program. Any rider who does not have a new card on its expiration date will be granted an extension from that date. Riders do not need to take any action to receive this extension as the smart cards will automatically be updated.

There are two ways to confirm eligibility through BAP:

1. From any computer or mobile device, visit the Illinois Department of Aging Benefit Access Program website at www.illinois.gov/aging and click on the “Benefit Access” tab.
 - The State only allows applications online, not in writing or over the telephone
 - The applicant must submit documentation online, which may require scanning documents to a computer to submit them online

--MORE--

2. If assistance is needed filling out the online form to confirm eligibility for the Illinois Benefit Access Program, an applicant may do one of the following:

- Call the Illinois Department on Aging at (800) 252-8966 to find a conveniently located center where staff can assist in filling the application or
- Chicago residents can visit any of the City of Chicago's six Regional Senior Centers Monday through Friday, between 8:30 AM and 3:30PM. Riders can call 311 to find the closest Regional Senior Center.

###

About the RTA

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is the only transit agency charged with regional financial oversight, funding, and transit planning for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace bus and paratransit. Riders take more than two million trips each weekday on the RTA region's transit system in six counties with 7,200 transit route miles throughout Northeastern Illinois. The Agency also provides customer services including online and telephone travel planning assistance and travel training for seniors and people with disabilities. For more information, visit www.RTAchicago.org.